

Congressman and Veterans' Affairs Assistant Secretary commend Vermont colleges for taking part in Yellow Ribbon program Rep. Peter Welch and U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs Assistant Secretary Tammy Duckworth kicked off the Post-9/11 GI Bill Tuesday morning at Champlain College, raising awareness of new educational benefits available to recent veterans.

Duckworth, an Iraq War veteran and former director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, was in Vermont Tuesday by invitation of Welch. In addition to the Champlain College event, Duckworth and Welch planned to hold a veterans' town hall at the Rutland VFW.

Alongside veterans and education leaders from throughout Vermont, Welch and Duckworth outlined the Post-9/11 GI Bill - the most extensive educational assistance program authorized since the original GI Bill was signed into law in 1944. The new GI Bill, which was passed by Congress last year and which takes effect August 1st, allows eligible veterans who served at least 90 days active duty since September 11, 2001, to receive an in-state, undergraduate education at a public institution at no cost.

Welch and Duckworth also commended private Vermont colleges and universities that have joined the Yellow Ribbon Program, which provides dollar-for-dollar matching funds from the VA to institutions that provide tuition for veterans above the amount funded through the new GI Bill.

"After the Second World War, the original GI Bill sparked an economic revolution that created the middle class. As our country faces serious challenges, it is appropriate that we support a new generation of veterans in creating economic opportunity through higher education," Welch said. "I commend Sec. Duckworth's commitment to ensuring our most recent veterans have the resources they need to pursue a college degree, and I thank Vermont's colleges and universities for stepping up for veterans."

"The education benefits in the Post-9/11 GI Bill give Veterans unprecedented opportunities to pursue college degrees," Duckworth said. "The Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to helping Veterans receive this important education assistance."

Duckworth and Welch were joined at the event by veterans from throughout Vermont and by presidents of several colleges and universities taking part in the Yellow Ribbon Program. They were also joined by World War II veteran George Courville, who participated in the original GI Bill, Iraq War veteran and Norwich University ROTC instructor Paul Stafford, VFW National

Legislative Officer Ed Laviletta, and Champlain College President Dave Finney.

For more information about the new GI Bill, [click here](#) . For information about the Yellow Ribbon Program, [click here](#) . To see a list of Vermont colleges and universities taking part in the Yellow Ribbon Program, [click here](#) .